direction, the winds taking in Queensland and New South Wales a westerly, and in Victoria a northerly, direction. The hot weather culminated in terrific dust-storms in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, and during these storms "fireballs" were seen hovering in the air. On the sea, "red rain" was experienced by several passing vessels.

The following is an abstract of what happened :—

Melbourne, Wednesday, November 13. Weather phenomenal, great heat, dust-storms, in all parts of Victoria.

At Boort, great fireballs fell in the street, throwing up sparks as they exploded. The whole air appeared to be on fire ; intervals of complete darkness ; lanterns had to be used in daytime, and fowls went to roost.

At Longdale, a house set on fire by a fireball.

Balls of fire burst on the poppet heads of the New Barambogie mine, Chiltern, Victoria, putting the timbering of the shaft on fire. Almost every meteorological station in Victoria sent in similar reports—fireballs, darkness in daytime, and people stumbling about with lanterns.

Sydney. On November 14, Mr. Bruggman, of Parramatta, was paralysed by a fireball bursting over his head.

Harden, Wednesday, November 13. During a storm yesterday at Murrumburrah, a huge "fireball" hovered over the houses for a considerable time and then disappeared.

H. I. JENSEN.

Caboolture, Queensland, January 1.

A New South Wales Meteorite.

ON reading the account of the fall of the Crumlin meteorite given by several correspondents in your issue of October 9, 1902, I was struck with the parallelism between this occurrence and the fall of the Mount Browne stone in this State on July 17 of this year. Mount Browne is situated near the township of Milparinka, in the extreme north-west corner of New South Wales. About 9.30 a.m. on that date, a loud explosion was heard. In the direction of the sound, a hut is said to have caught fire, this being immediately followed by a whizzing sound and the raising of a cloud of dust at some distance. The stone was picked up within five minutes, while still warm. It may now be seen at the Mining and Geological Museum, Sydney. Its present weight is about 25 lb., but a small piece has been broken off one end. The fractured surface is exceptionally light in colour, the stone being largely non-metallic.

An account or the phenomena attending the fall has been given by Mr. H. C. Russell in a paper recently read before the Royal Society of New South Wales. GEORGE W. CARD.

Sydney, December 23, 1902.

The Holy Shroud of Turin.

I AM sorry to find, from an interesting paper by the Rev. Father Thurston on the Holy Shroud in the current number of *The Month*, that I have mistranslated the passage from Chifflet's "De Linteis Sepulchralibus, &c." p. 198, in which he refers to the spirituous tincture of cinnamon and cloves being used for giving the correct colour in making a copy on linen of the Besancon shroud for King Philip II. of Spain, and not for depicting the King himself. Not having Chifflet's book at hand when writing, I overlooked the reference to the Besançon shroud, but the mistake does not affect the argument regarding the use of such tinctures by painters in the Middle Ages.

J. WATERHOUSE.

A Simple Sensitive Flame.

A USEFUL sensitive flame may be obtained from a Bunsen burner with the usual gas supply by completely excluding the air and lowering the gas pressure until the flame becomes lop-sided but quiet. Its range of sensibility extends for singing over the three octaves of the bass and treble clefs, for whistling over the middle octave of these three. The recovery is prompt enough to allow of a response to each note of a slow staccato passage. The type of burner found best is one with a brass tube three-eighths of an inch bore, with one side hole for air which is quite closed by a half-turn of its tightly-fitting sleeve. E. H. BARTON.

University College, Nottingham, January.

THE FUNERAL OF SIR GEORGE STOKES.

THE funeral of Sir George Stokes at Cambridge on Thursday last was an impressive ceremony in which distinguished representatives of many branches of learning took part. The University church was crowded in every part, and the assembly constituted a living witness to the esteem in which the memory of Sir George Stokes is held in the intellectual world.

The coffin containing the late Master's body was first carried round the court of Pembroke College, in accordance with an ancient custom reserved for Masters, the procession being formed of the choir and officiating clergy, the fellows of the College, former fellows, masters of arts, bachelors of arts and undergraduates.

At the gate of the College, the relatives in carriages took their place in the procession immediately after the fellows. All the other members of the College followed the carriages in their order to Great St. Mary's Church.

In the meantime, another procession was being arranged in the Senate House, comprising the Vice-Chancellor, the heads of houses, doctors, University officers, professors, and members of the council of the Senate, together with the representatives of learned societies. This procession included :—

The Vice Chancellor (Dr. F. H. Chase), with the registrary (Mr. J. W. Clark), in front of whom walked the Esquire Bedells ; Lord Braybrook, Lord Kelvin, Sir Richard Jebb, M.P., the Masters of Trinity, Clare, Peterhouse, Trinity Hall, St. Catherine's, Jesus, Christ's, St. John's, Emmanuel, Downing, Magdalen, and Selwyn, Profs. Allbutt, Mason, Swete, Clark, Macalister, Bevan, Ward, Hughes, Lewis, Liveing, Ridgeway, Barnes, Marshall, Newton, Westlake, Mayor, Ewing, Skeat, Stanton, Ward and Reid ; the Public Orator (Dr. Sandys), Dr. Routh, Dr. Guillemard, Dr. Harmer, Dr. W. G. Lax, Dr. D. Macalister, Dr. Haddon, Dr. James, Dr. Dalton, Dr. Jackson, Dr. Baker, Dr. Langley, Dr. McTaggart, Rev. Dr. Cunningham, Archdeacon Emery, the Rev. J. O. F. Murray, Rev. H. J. Sharpe, Messrs. Berry, H. Darwin Headley, Wright, Mollison, Scott, Shipley, Grey, Durnford, Wyatt, Magmisson, and many others.

The representatives of learned societies and other bodies were as follow :—

The Royal Society—Lord Kelvin (past president), Mr. A. B. Kempe (vice-president and treasurer), Dr. W. T. Blanford (vice-president), Prof. J. W. Judd (vice-president), Prof. G. Carey Foster (vice-president), Prof. R. B. Clifton, Sir Michael Foster (secretary), Dr. J. Larmor (secretary), Dr. T. E. Thorpe (foreign secretary), Sir Arthur Rücker and Prof. A. Schuster (fellows), Mr. R. W. F. Harrison (assistant secretary), together with Profs. Liveing, J. J. Thomson, G. H. Darwin, J. Dewar, A. R. Forsyth, Sir Robert Ball and Dr. Glazebrook. The president of the Royal Society was absent by medical advice.

Victoria University—Prof. Horace Lamb.

Owens College—Prof. Osborne Reynolds and Prof. A. Schuster.

Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society—Prof. Osborne Reynolds.

London Mathematical Society—Prof. Horace Lamb (president), Prof. A. E. H. Love and Prof. W. Burnside (secretaries), Dr. J. Larmor (treasurer).

University of Oxford—Profs. Turner and Clifton.

University of London—Sir A. Rücker (principal), Prof. Tilden (Dean), Sir William Ramsay.

British Association and Royal Institution—Prof. Dewar.

National Physical Laboratory—Dr. R. T. Glazebrook.

Solar Physics Committee and Observatory—Sir Norman Lockyer, Prof. George Darwin.

Institution of Electrical Engineers—Prof. W. G. Adams.

Victoria Institute—Prof. Hull and Mr. Martin Rouse.

Cambridge Antiquarian Society—Mr. T. D. Atkinson.

Chemical Society—Prof. W. A. Tilden (treasurer).

Cambridge Philosophical Society—Dr. H. F. Baker (president), Prof. A. Macalister (past president), Mr. H. F. Newall (treasurer), Mr. A. E. Shipley, Mr. S. Skinner and Mr. H. M. Macdonald (secretaries), Prof. Liveing, Prof. J. J. Thomson and Dr. Hobson (members of the council).

Royal Astronomical Society—Dr. J. W. L. Glaisher (president).

Royal College of Science—Prof. W. A. Tilden.
Meteorological Council—Admiral Sir W. Wharton.
Christian Evidence Society—The Rev. C. Lloyd Engstrome.
Corporation of Cambridge—The Mayor (Councillor P. H. Young), the Ex-Mayor (Ald. G. Kett).

After the service, the procession left the church in the following order :—The officiating clergy, the body, the fellows of the college, the relatives, honorary fellows and former fellows of the College, the Vice-Chancellor and other representatives of the University, together with representatives of learned societies, members of the Senate, bachelors of arts, scholars, other members of the College, and all those desiring to attend the service at the Mill Road Cemetery, where the interment took place.

EXPLORATIONS IN ICELAND[1]

DURING the nineteenth century, and up to the present time, a considerable number of books and magazine articles were published in England and America giving an account of travels in Iceland. The greater part of these writings contain merely personal details, interesting only to the narrator himself and his nearest relations; some remind us pleasantly of Mark Twain's "Innocents Abroad"; others are well written and possess some literary value, though these also are very liable to contain errors.

Some of these travels have a quasi-scientific tendency, but do not contain anything new, and very few contain anything of real scientific importance. We may, perhaps, say that the oldest books describing travels in Iceland are also the best, and that the books of Hooker (1809), Mackenzie (1810) and Henderson (1814-15) are far superior to nearly all later works. At that period, the traveller had time to study the literature and the people, and to investigate for himself the language of the country and the history and customs of the inhabitants. At the present day, people travel much more, and generally study very little; the traveller passes over half the world without any serious preparation beforehand, and, when he returns home, he considers it to be his duty to enlighten the reading public with a thick book containing observations and discoveries about matters which hundreds of other travellers have described much better before him. Fortunately, however, there are some honourable exceptions, and we are always delighted to welcome a book that really contains anything new. Mr. W. Bisiker's book belongs to this class. The author made it his object to explore and map out the district of Kjalvegur in Central Iceland, one of the most beautiful parts of the interior, which had never been surveyed in detail, and Mr. Bisiker's admirable map of the district is, therefore, of permanent geographical importance. The book also contains numerous photographs, which give a very good idea of the various geological and physico-geographical characteristics, and there are some good illustrations of the mode of travelling in Iceland. In addition, Mr. Hill has given some interesting notices of the distribution of plants in Kjalvegur, with a list of the plants which were found, among which is *Ophioglossum vulgatum*, which had not previously been found in Iceland.

TH. THORODDSEN.

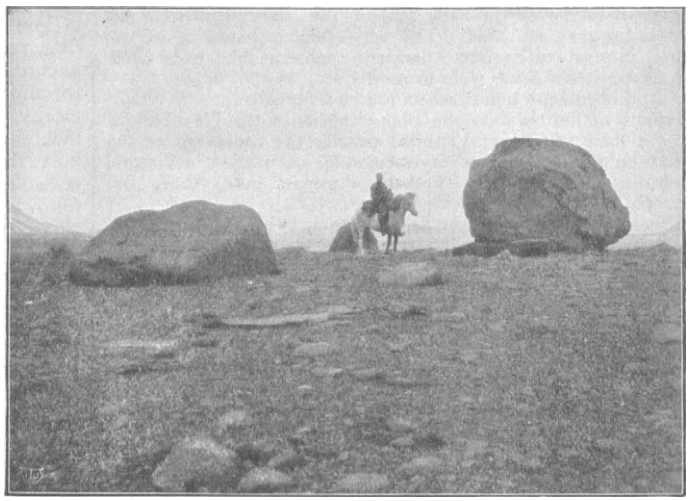

FIG. 2.—Immense Erratics. (From Bisiker's "Across Iceland.")

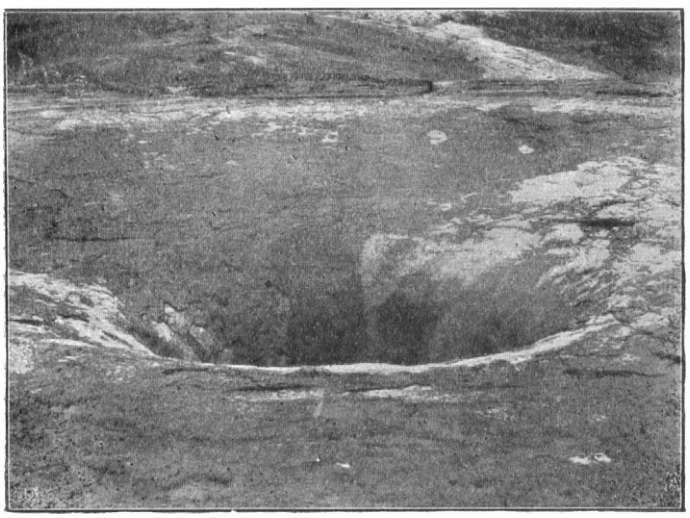

FIG. 1.—The Funnel or Crater of Geysir. (From Bisiker's "Across Iceland.")

[1] "Across Iceland." By W. Bisiker, F.R.G.S. With an Appendix by A. W. Hill, M.A., on the Plants Collected. Pp. xii + 236. (London: Edward Arnold, 1902.) Price 12*s.* 6*d.*

ROYAL COMMISSION ON LONDON LOCOMOTION.

IT was announced on Saturday last that the King had been pleased to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the means of locomotion and transport in London. The Commission is also asked to report upon the following points :—

(*a*) As to the measures which they deem most effectual for the improvement of the same by the development and interconnection of railways and tramways on or below the surface, by increasing the facilities for other forms of mechanical locomotion, by better provision for the organisation and regulation of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, or otherwise;

(*b*) As to the desirability of establishing some authority or tribunal to which all schemes of railway or tramway construction of a local character should be referred, and the powers which it would be advisable to confer upon such a body.